

Flight News: 10/24/09

Klub Sport and Gunnar Racing Shop Tour by Ralph Fritsche

For several years I have hoped to arrange a visit to one of Florida's race shops. Fortunately, Jonathan Parker's racing contacts facilitated a memorable event. Our caravan of Porsches headed south to Riviera Beach where, hidden to even locals, lie two of the most fascinating Porsche facilities that Florida has to offer.

Our first stop was Klub Sport Racing, where we were greeted by Phil Bagley and Bruce



Ellsworth. They are longtime friends who have been able to turn their passion into a profitable business specializing in acquiring vintage Porsches, restoring them to racing condition, then selling them to vintage racers. They also operate a successful "arrive and drive" program where all the racer need do is show up and compete--Klub Sport transports, maintains, and repairs the vehicle. The shop reflects their reputation for meticulous preparation, looking more like a museum with a large selection of factory racing posters on the walls and a variety of engines and parts neatly stored throughout the facility.

We stopped for lunch at a local sports bar and then headed for Gunnar Racing, just a few blocks away.

My desire to visit Gunnar began when fellow

SPC member Steve Hoffman and I were at the 2008 HSR Races at Sebring. There, sitting unattended was a tired-looking white Porsche 917 with shipping papers on the dash indicating it had just arrived in the US.

Well, fast forward to a couple of months ago when I learned of a YouTube video series produced by Kevin Jeanette of Gunnar Racing (go to www.youtube.com and search "Gunnar 917"). In this great 23 part series Kevin documents restoration of the very same 917 for this year's Rolex Monterey Historic Automobile Races. In watching the videos, it



was apparent that Gunnar was somewhere in Florida. Jonathan's friendship with Phil and Bruce at Klub Sport led to an invitation to visit Gunnar, with just one stipulation--Kevin insisted that the visitors arrive in Porsches! We abided by his wishes as 50 members showed up in 40 Porsches.

Kevin greeted us as we arrived and for the next three hours treated us to a 1st person tour of Porsche racing history, as Kevin had been there when much of that history was made and had worked on many of the very cars now in his shop.

Gunnar Racing's facilities include everything needed to perform complete restorations. Rare racing Porsches are located throughout the facility, including the newly restored 917 now back from Monterey, now in the same yellow and red livery as when it appeared at the 24 hours of Le Mans in 1970 and more recently on the cover of the October Panorama.

As a token of our appreciation, Jonathan presented our hosts with Space Coast Region caps. We'll be watching to see if Kevin wear his in a future YouTube video.